H.P. LOVECRAFT

SELECTED POEMS

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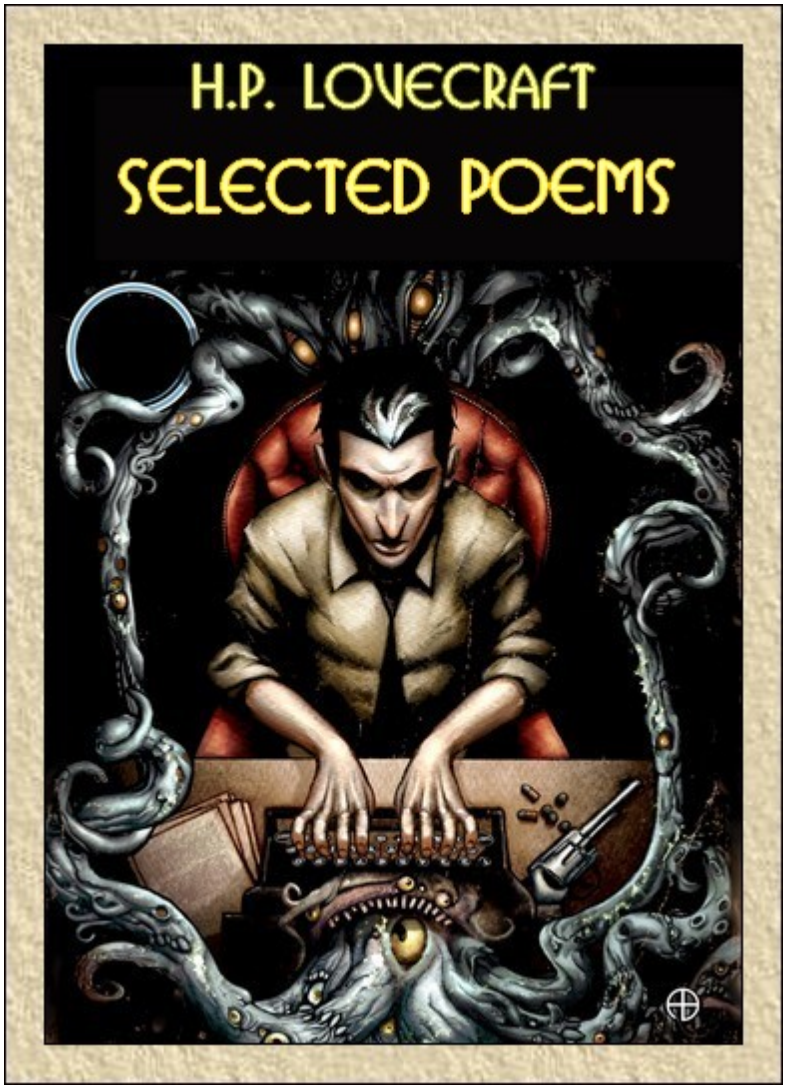

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AN AMERICAN TO MOTHER ENGLAND

Published in *Poesy*, January 1916

England! My England! can the surging sea
That lies between us tear my heart from thee?
Can distant birth and distant dwelling drain
Th' ancestral blood that warms the loyal vein?
Isle of my Fathers! hear the filial song
Of him whose sources but to thee belong!
World-Conquering Mother! by thy mighty hand
Was carv'd from savage wilds my native land:
Thy matchless sons the firm foundation laid;
Thy matchless arts the nascent nation made:
By thy just laws the young republic grew,
And through thy greatness, kindred greatness knew.
What man that springs from thy untainted line
But sees Columbia's virtues all as thine?
Whilst nameless multitudes upon our shore
From the dim corners of creation pour,
Whilst mongrel slaves crawl hither to partake
Of Saxon liberty they could not make,
From such an alien crew in grief I turn,
And for the mother's voice of Britain burn.
England! can aught remove the cherish'd chain
That binds my spirit to thy blest domain?
Can Revolution's bitter precepts sway
The soul that must the ties of race obey?
Create a new Columbia if ye will,
The flesh that forms me is Britannic still!
Hail! oaken shades, and meads of dewy green,
So oft in sleep, yet ne'er in waking seen.
Peal out, ye ancient chimes, from vine-clad tower
Where pray'd my fathers in a vanish'd hour:
What countless years of rev'rence can ye claim
From bygone worshippers that bore my

name!
Their forms are crumbling in the vaults around,
Whilst I, across the sea, but dream the sound.
Return, Sweet Vision! Let me glimpse again
The stone-built abbey, rising o'er the plain;
The neighb'ring village with its sun-shower'd square;
The shaded mill-stream, and the forest fair,
The hedge-lin'd lane, that leads to rustic cot
Where sweet contentment is the peasant's lot:
The mystic grove, by Druid wraiths possess'd,
The flow'ring fields, with fairy-castles blest:
And the old manor-house, sedate and dark,
Set in the shadows of the wooded park.
Can this be dreaming? Must my eyelids close
That I may catch the fragrance of the rose?
Is it in fancy that the midnight vale
Thrills with the warblings of the nightingale?
A golden moon bewitching radiance yields,
And England's fairies trip o'er England's fields.
England! Old England! in my love for thee
No dream is mine, but blessed memory;
Such haunting images and hidden fires
Course with the bounding blood of British sires:
From British bodies, minds, and souls I come,
And from them draw the vision of their home.

Awake, Columbia! scorn the vulgar age
That bids thee slight thy lordly heritage.
Let not the wide Atlantic's wildest wave
Burst the blest bonds that fav'ring Nature gave:
Connecting surges 'twixt the nations run,
Our Saxon souls dissolving into one!

THE ANCIENT TRACK

Published in *Weird Tales*, March 1930

There was no hand to hold me back
That night I found the ancient track
Over the hill, and strained to see
The fields that teased my memory.
This tree, that wall—I knew them well,
And all the roofs and orchards fell
Familiarly upon my mind
As from a past not far behind.
I knew what shadows would be cast
When the late moon came up at last
From back of Zaman's Hill, and how
The vale would shine three hours from now.
And when the path grew steep and high,
And seemed to end against the sky,
I had no fear of what might rest
Beyond that silhouetted crest.
Straight on I walked, while all the night
Grew pale with phosphorescent light,
And wall and farmhouse gable glowed
Unearthly by the climbing road.
There was the milestone that I knew—
"Two miles to Dunwich"—now the view
Of distant spire and roofs would dawn
With ten more upward paces gone….

There was no hand to hold me back
That night I found the ancient track,
And reached the crest to see outspread
A valley of the lost and dead:
And over Zaman's Hill the horn
Of a malignant moon was born,
To light the weeds and vines that grew
On ruined walls I never knew.
The fox-fire glowed in field and bog,
And unknown waters spewed a fog
Whose curling talons mocked the thought
That I had ever known this spot.
Too well I saw from the mad scene
That my loved past had never been—
Nor was I now upon the trail

Descending to that long-dead vale.
Around was fog—ahead, the spray
Of star-streams in the Milky Way….
There was no hand to hold me back
That night I found the ancient track.

“ARCADIA” BY HEAD BALLEDUP

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

O give me the life of the Village,
Uninhibited, free, and sweet.
The place where the arts all flourish,
Grove Court and Christopher Street.

I am sick of the old conventions,
And critics who will not praise,
So sing ho for the open spaces,
And esthetes with kindly ways.

Here every bard is a genius,
And artists are Raphaels,
And above the roofs of Patchin Place
The Muse of Talent dwells.

ASTROPHOBOS

Published in *The United Amateur*, January 1918

In the Midnight heaven's burning
Through the ethereal deeps afar
Once I watch'd with restless yearning
An alluring aureate star;
Ev'ry eve aloft returning
Gleaming nigh the Arctic Car.

Mystic waves of beauty blended
With the gorgeous golden rays
Phantasies of bliss descended
In a myrrh'd Elysian haze.
In the lyre-born chords extended
Harmonies of Lydian lays.

And (thought I) lies scenes of pleasure,
Where the free and blessed dwell,
And each moment bears a treasure,
Freighted with the lotos-spell,
And there floats a liquid measure
From the lute of Israfel.

There (I told myself) were shining
Worlds of happiness unknown,
Peace and Innocence entwining
By the Crowned Virtue's throne;
Men of light, their thoughts refining
Purer, fairer, than my own.

Thus I mus'd when o'er the vision
Crept a red delirious change;
Hope dissolving to derision,
Beauty to distortion strange;
Hymnic chords in weird collision,
Spectral sights in endless range….
Crimson burn'd the star of madness
As behind the beams I peer'd;
All was woe that seem'd but gladness
Ere my gaze with Truth was sear'd;
Cacodaemons, mir'd with madness,
Through the fever'd flick'ring leer'd….

Now I know the fiendish fable
The the golden glitter bore;
Now I shun the spangled sable
That I watch'd and lov'd before;
But the horror, set and stable,
Haunts my soul forevermore!

THE CATS

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

Babels of blocks to the high heavens towering
Flames of futility swirling below;
Poisonous fungi in brick and stone flowering,
Lanterns that shudder and death-lights that glow.

Black monstrous bridges across oily rivers,
Cobwebs of cable to nameless things spun;
Catacomb deeps whose dank chaos delivers
Streams of live fetor that rots in the sun.

Color and dream the, disease and decaying,
Shrieking and ringing and crawling insane,
Rabbles exotic to stranger-gods praying,
Jumbles of odor that stifle the brain.

Legions of cats from the alleys nocturnal.
Howling and lean in the glare of the moon,
Screaming the future with mouthings infernal,
Yelling the Garden of Pluto's red rune.

Tall towers and pyramids ivy'd and crumbling,
Bats that swoop low in the weed-cumber'd streets;
Bleak Arkham bridges o'er rivers whose rumbling
Joins with no voice as the thick horde retreats.

Belfries that buckle against the moon totter,
Caverns whose mouths are by mosses effac'd,
And living to answer the wind and the water,
Only the lean cats that howl in the wastes.

CHRISTMASTIDE

Published in *The Tryout*, November 1920

The cottage hearth beams warm and bright,
The candles gaily glow;
The stars emit a kinder light
Above the drifted snow.

Down from the sky a magic steals
To glad the passing year,
And belfries sing with joyous peals,
For Christmastide is here!

THE CITY

Published in *The Vagrant*, October 1919

It was golden and splendid,
That City of light;
A vision suspended
In deeps of the night;
A region of wonder and glory,
whose temples were marble and white.

I remember the season
It dawn'd on my gaze;
The mad time of unreason,
The brain-numbing days
When Winter, white-sheeted and ghastly,
stalks onward to torture and craze.

More lovely than Zion
It shone in the sky
When the beams of Orion
Beclouded my eye,
Bringing sleep that was filled with dim mem'ries
of moments obscure and gone by.

Its mansions were stately,
With carvings made fair,
Each rising sedately
On terraces rare,
And the gardens were fragrant and bright
with strange miracles blossoming there.

The avenues lur'd me
With vistas sublime;
Tall arches assur'd me
That once on a time
I had wander'd in rapture beneath them,
and bask'd in the Halcyon clime.

On the plazas were standing
A sculptur'd array;
Long bearded, commanding,
rave men in their day—

But one stood dismantled and broken,
its bearded face battered away.

In that city effulgent
No mortal I saw,
But my fancy, indulgent
To memory's law,
Linger'd long on the forms in the plazas,
and eyed their stone features with awe.

I fann'd the faint ember
That glow'd in my mind,
And strove to remember
The aeons behind;
To rove thro' infinity freely,
and visit the past unconfin'd.

Then the horrible warning
Upon my soul sped
Like the ominous morning
That rises in red,
And in panic I flew from the knowledge
of terrors forgotten and dead.

THE CONSCRIPT

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

I am a peaceful working man,
I am not wise or strong,
But I can follow Nature's plan,
In labour, rest, and song.

One day the men that rule us all
Decided we must die,
Else pride and freedom surely fall
In the dim bye and bye!

They told me I must write my name
Upon a scroll of death;
That some day I should rise to fame
By giving up my breath.

I do not know what I have done
That I should thus be bound
To wait for tortures one by one
And then an unmark'd mound.

I hate no man, and yet they say
That I must fight and kill;
That I must suffer day by day
To please a master's will.

I used to have a conscience free,
But now they bid it rest;
They've made a number out of me,
And I must ne'er protest.

They tell of trenches, long and deep,
Fill'd with the mangled slain.
They talk till I can scarcely sleep,
So reeling is my brain.

They tell of filth, and blood, and woe;
Of things beyond belief;
Of things that make me tremble so
With mingled fright and grief.

I do not know what I shall do—
Is not the law unjust?
I can't do what they want me to,
And yet they say I must!

Each day my doom doth nearer bring;
Each day the State prepares;
Sometimes I feel a watching thing
That stares, and stares, and stares.

I never seem to sleep—my head
Whirls in the queerest way.
Why am I chosen to be dead
Upon some fateful day?

Yet hark—some fiber is o'erwrought
A giddying wine I quaff—
Things seem so odd, I can do naught
But laugh, and laugh, and laugh!

DEAD PASSION'S FLAME
A POME BY BLANK FRAILTY

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

Ah, Passion, like a voice— that buds!
With many thorns…that sharply stick:
Recalls to me the longing of our bloods…
And—makes my wearied heart requick!…

DESPAIR

Published in *Pine Cones*, June 1919

O'er the midnight moorlands crying,
Thro' the cypress forests sighing,
In the night-wind madly flying,
Hellish forms with streaming hair;
In the barren branches creaking,
By the stagnant swamp-pools speaking,
Past the shore-cliffs ever shrieking,
Damn'd demons of despair.

Once, I think I half remember,
Ere the grey skies of November
Quench'd my youth's aspiring ember,
Liv'd there such a thing as bliss;
Skies that now are dark were beaming,
Bold and azure, splendid seeming
Till I learn'd it all was dreaming—
Deadly drowsiness of Dis.

But the stream of Time, swift flowing,
Brings the torment of half-knowing—
Dimly rushing, blindly going
Past the never-trodden lea;
And the voyager, repining,
Sees the wicked death-fires shining,
Hears the wicked petrel's whining
As he helpless drifts to sea.

Evil wings in ether beating;
Vultures at the spirit eating;
Things unseen forever fleeting
Black against the leering sky.
Ghastly shades of bygone gladness,
Clawing fiends of future sadness,
Mingle in a cloud of madness
Ever on the soul to lie.

Thus the living, lone and sobbing,
In the throes of anguish throbbing,
With the loathsome Furies robbing
Night and noon of peace and rest.

But beyond the groans and grating
Of abhorrent Life, is waiting
Sweet Oblivion, culminating
All the years of fruitless quest.

FACT AND FANCY

Published in *The Tryout*, February 1917

How dull the wretch, whose philosophic mind
Disdains the pleasures of fantastic kind;
Whose prosy thoughts the joys of life exclude,
And wreck the solace of the poet's mood!
Young Zeno, practis'd in the Stoic's art,
Rejects the language of the glowing heart;
Dissolves sweet Nature to a mess of laws;
Condemns th' effect whilst looking for the cause;
Freezes poor Ovid in an iced review,
And sneers because his fables are untrue!
In search of hope the hopeful zealot goes,
But all the sadder turns, the more he knows!
Stay! Vandal sophist, whose deep lore would blast
The grateful legends of the storied past;
Whose tongue in censure flays th' embellish'd page,
And scorns the comforts of a dreary age:
Wouldst strip the foliage from the vital bough
Till all men grow as wisely dull as thou?
Happy the man whose fresh, untainted eye
Discerns a Pantheon in the spangled sky;
Finds sylphs and dryads in the waving trees,
And spies soft Notus in the southern breeze
For whom the stream a cheering carol sings,
While reedy music by the fountain rings;
To whom the waves a Nereid tale confide
Till friendly presence fills the rising tide.
Happy is he, who void of learning's woes,
Th' ethereal life of bodied Nature knows;
I scorn the sage that tells me it but seems,
And flout his gravity in sunlight dreams!

FESTIVAL ("YULE HORROR")

Published in *Weird Tales*, December 1926

Originally a Christmas poem sent to Farnsworth Wright, who surprised Lovecraft by publishing it as "Yule Horror" in the December 1926 edition of *Weird Tales*.

There is snow on the ground,
And the valleys are cold,
And a midnight profound
Blackly squats o'er the wold;
But a light on the hilltops half-seen hints of
feastings unhallowed and old.

There is death in the clouds,
There is fear in the night,
For the dead in their shrouds
Hail the sun's turning flight.
And chant wild in the woods as they dance
round a Yule-altar fungous and white.

To no gale of Earth's kind
Sways the forest of oak,
Where the thick boughs entwined
By mad mistletoes choke,
For these pow'rs are the pow'rs of the dark,
from the graves of the lost Druid-folk.

And mayst thou to such deeds
Be an abbot and priest,
Singing cannibal greeds
At each devil-wrought feast,
And to all the incredulous world
showing dimly the sign of the beast.

A GARDEN

Published in *The Vagrant*, Spring 1927

There's an ancient, ancient garden that I see sometimes in dreams,
Where the very Maytime sunlight plays and glows with spectral gleams;
Where the gaudy-tinted blossoms seem to wither into grey,
And the crumbling walls and pillars waken thoughts of yesterday.
There are vines in nooks and crannies, and there's moss about the pool,
And the tangled weedy thicket chokes the arbor dark and cool:
In the silent sunken pathways springs a herbage sparse and spare,
Where the musty scent of dead things dulls the fragrance of the air.
There is not a living creature in the lonely space around,
And the hedge-encompass'd quiet never echoes to a sound.
As I walk, and wait, and listen, I will often seek to find
When it was I knew that garden in an age long left behind;
I will oft conjure a vision of a day that is no more,
As I gaze upon the grey, grey scenes I feel I knew before.
Then a sadness settles o'er me, and a tremor seems to start—
For I know the flow'rs are shrivell'd hopes—the garden is my heart.

HALLOWE'EN IN A SUBURB

Published as "In a Suburb" in *The National Amateur*, March 1926

The steeples are white in the wild moonlight,
And the trees have a silver glare;
Past the chimneys high see the vampires fly,
And the harpies of upper air,
That flutter and laugh and stare.

For the village dead to the moon outspread
Never shone in the sunset's gleam,
But grew out of the deep that the dead years keep
Where the rivers of madness stream
Down the gulfs to a pit of dream.

A chill wind blows through the rows of sheaves
In the meadows that shimmer pale,
And comes to twine where the headstones shine
And the ghouls of the churchyard wail
For harvests that fly and fail.

Not a breath of the strange grey gods of change
That tore from the past its own
Can quicken this hour, when a spectral power
Spreads sleep o'er the cosmic throne,
And looses the vast unknown.

So here again stretch the vale and plain
That moons long-forgotten saw,
And the dead leap gay in the pallid ray,
Sprung out of the tomb's black maw
To shake all the world with awe.

And all that the morn shall greet forlorn,
The ugliness and the pest
Of rows where thick rise the stones and brick,
Shall some day be with the rest,
And brood with the shades unblest.

Then wild in the dark let the lemurs bark,
And the leprous spires ascend;
For new and old alike in the fold
Of horror and death are penned,
For the hounds of Time to rend.

THE HOUSE

Published in *The National Enquirer*, December 11, 1919

This poem is about the house at 135 Benefit Street in Providence that also inspired the short story "The Shunned House".

'Tis a grove-circled dwelling
Set close to a hill,
Where the branches are telling
Strange legends of ill;
Over timbers so old
That they breathe of the dead,
Crawl the vines, green and cold,
By strange nourishment fed;
And no man knows the juices they suck
from the depths of their dank slimy bed.

In the gardens are growing
Tall blossoms and fair,
Each pallid bloom throwing
Perfume on the air;
But the afternoon sun
with its shining red rays
Makes the picture loom dun
On the curious gaze,
And above the sweet scent of the the blossoms
rise odors of numberless days.

The rank grasses are waving
On terrace and lawn,
Dim memories savoring
Of things that have gone;
The stones of the walks
Are encrusted and wet,
And a strange spirit stalks
When the red sun has set.
And the soul of the watcher is fill'd
with faint pictures he fain would forget.

It was in the hot Junetime
I stood by that scene,
When the gold rays of noontime

Beat bright on the green.
But I shiver'd with cold,
Groping feebly for light,
As a picture unroll'd—
And my age-spanning sight
Saw the time I had been there before
flash like fulgury out of the night.

LAETA—A LAMENT

Published in *The Tryout*, February 1918

Respectfully dedicated to
Rheinhart Kiciner, Esq., with compliments of the author

How sad droop the willows by Zalal's fair side,
Where so lately I stray'd with my raven-hair'd bride;
Ev'ry light-floating lily, each flow'r on the shore,
Folds in sorrow since Laeta can see them no more!

Oh blest were the days when in childhood and hope
With my Laeta I rov'd o'er the blossom-clad slope,
Plucking white meadow-daisies and ferns by the stream,
As we laugh'd at the ripples that twinkle and gleam.

Not a bloom deck'd the mead that could rival in grace
The dear innocent charms of my Laeta's fair face;
Not a thrush thrill'd the grove with a carol so choice
As the silvery strains of my Laeta's sweet voice.

The shy nymphs of the woodlands, the fount, and the plain,
Strove to equal her beauty, but strove all in vain;
Yet no envy they bore her, while fruitless they strove,
For so pure was my Laeta, they could only love!

When the warm breath of Auster play'd soft

o'er the flow'rs,
And young Zephyrus rustled the gay scented bow'rs,
Ev'ry breeze seem'd to pause as it drew near the fair,
Too much aw'd at her sweetness to tumble her hair.

How fond were our dreams on the day when we stood
In the ivy-grown temple beside the dark wood;
When our pledges we seal'd at the sanctify'd shrine,
And I knew that my Laeta forever was mine!

How blissful our thoughts when the wild autumn came,
And the forests with scarlet and gold were aflame;
Yet how heavy my heart when I first felt the fear
That my starry-eyed Laeta would fade with the year!

The pastures were sere and the heavens were grey
When I laid my lov'd Laeta forever away,
And the river god pity'd, as weeping I pac'd
Mingling hot bitter tears with his cold frozen waste.

Now the flow'rs have return'd, but they bloom not so sweet
As in days when they blossom'd round Laeta's dear feet;
And the willows complain to the answering hill,
And the thrushes that once were so happy are still.

The green meadows and groves in their loneliness pine,
Whilst the dryads no more in their madrigals

join,
The breeze once so joyous now murmurs and sighs,
And blows soft o’er the spot where my lov’d Laeta lies.

So pensive I roam o’er the desolate lawn
Where we wander’d and lov’d in the days that are gone,
And I yearn for the autumn, when Zalal’s blue tide
Shall sing low by my grave and the lov’d Laeta’s side.

LIFE'S MYSTERY

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

On Mr. L. Phillips Howard's Profound Poem Entitled "Life's Mystery"

Life! Ah, Life!
What may this fluorescent pageant mean?
Who can the evanescent object glean?
He that is dead is the key of Life—
Gone is the symbol, deep is the grave!

Man is a breath, and Life is the fire;
Birth is death, and silence the choir
Wrest from the aeons the heart of gold!
Tear from the fabric the threads that are old!
Life! Ah, Life!
—L. Phillips Howard

These lines profound expressly were design'd
To please the deep poetic modern mind.
Herein no tawdry metric art appears,
Nor does the meaning roughly stain our ears.
With true chaotic grace the formless rhymes
Stagger along, and suit the cultur'd times.
Should some chance word a directer sound present,
Frown not too harshly on the accident,
And if one trace of utter sense be there,
Forgive the poet for his want of care.

LINES ON GENERAL ROBERT EDWARD LEE

Published in *The Coyote*, January 1917

Si veris magna paratur
Fama bonis, et si successu nuda remoto
Inspicitur virtus, quidquid laudamus in ullo
Majorum, fortuna fuit.
—Lucan

Whilst martial echoes o'er the wave resound,
And Europe's gore incarnadines the ground;
Today no foreign hero we bemoan,
But count the glowing virtues of our own!
illustrious LEE! around whose honor'd name
Entwines a patriot's and a Christian's fame;
With whose just praise admiring nations ring,
And whom repenting foes contritely sing!
When first our land fraternal fury bore,
And Sumter's guns alarm'd the anxious shore;
When Faction's reign ancestral rights o'erthrew,
And sunder'd States a mutual hatred knew;
Then clash'd contending chiefs of kindred line,
In flesh to suffer and in fame to shine.
But o'er them all, majestic in his might,
Rose LEE, unrivall'd, to sublimest height:
With torturing choice defy'd opposing Fate,
And shunn'd Temptation for his native State!
Thus Washington his monarch's rule o'erturned
When young Columbia with rebellion burn'd.
And what in Washington the world reveres,
In LEE with equal magnitude appears.
Our nation's Father, crown'd with vict'ry bays,
Enjoys a loving land's eternal praise:
Let, then, our hearts with equal rev'rence greet
His proud successor, rising o'er defeat!
Around his greatness pour disheart'ning woes,
But still he tow'rs above his conquering foes.

Silence! ye jackal herd that vainly blame
Th' unspotted leader by a traitor's name.
If such was LEE, let blushing Justice mourn,
And trait'rous Liberty endure our scorn!
As Philopoemen once sublimely strove,
And earn'd declining Hellas' thankful love;
So followed LEE the purest patriot's part,
And wak'd the worship of the grateful heart:
The South her soul in body'd form discerns;
The North from LEE a nobler freedom learns!
Attend! ye sons of Albion's ancient race,
Whate'er your country, and whate'er your place;
LEE'S valiant deeds, though dear to Southern song,
To all our Saxon strain as well belong,
Courage like his the parent Island won,
And led an Empire past the setting sun;
To realms unknown our laws and language bore,
Rais'd England's banner on the desert shore;
Crush'd the proud rival, and subdued the sea
For ages past, and aeons yet to be!
From Scotia's hilly bounds the paean rolls,
And Afric's distant Cape great LEE extols;
The sainted soul and manly mien combine
To grace Britannia's and Virginia's line
As dullards now in thoughtless fervor prate
Of shameful peace, and sing th' unmanly State;
As churls their piping reprobations shriek,
And damn the heroes that protect the weak;
Let LEE'S brave shade the timid throng accost,
And give them back the manhood they have lost!
What kindlier spirit, breathing from on high,
Can teach us how to live and how to die?

THE MESSENGER

Published in Weird Tales, July 1938

This was written in response to Bertrand Kelton Hart, author of a daily column called "The Sideshow" in *The Providence Journal*, who, upon discovering that Wilcox's residence in "The Call of Cthulhu" (7 Thomas Street) was his own, published in his column "…I shall not be happy until, joining league with wraiths and ghouls, I have plumped down at least one large and abiding ghost by way of reprisal upon [Lovecraft's] own doorstep in Barnes street… I think I shall teach it to moan in a minor dissonance every morning at 3 o'clock sharp, with a clinking of chains."

The thing, he said, would come in the night at three
From the old churchyard on the hill below;
But crouching by an oak fire's wholesome glow,
I tried to tell myself it could not be.

Surely, I mused, it was pleasantry
Devised by one who did not truly know
The Elder Sign, bequeathed from long ago,
That sets the fumbling forms of darkness free.

He had not meant it—no—but still I lit
Another lamp as starry Leo climbed
Out of the Seekonk, and a steeple chimed
Three—and the firelight faded, bit by bit.

Then at the door that cautious rattling came —
And the mad truth devoured me like a flame!

NATHICANA

Published in *The Vagrant*, Spring 1927

(Co-author: Alfred Galpin)

In a letter to Donald Wandrei written August 2, 1927, Lovecraft said that this poem was supposed to be a "parody on those stylistic excesses which really have no basic meaning". In his response ten days later, Wandrei said "It is a rare and curious kind of literary freak, a satire too good, so that, instead of parodying, it possesses, the original."

It was in the pale garden of Zais;
The mist-shrouded gardens of Zais,
Where blossoms the white nephalot,
The redolent herald of midnight.
There slumber the still lakes of crystal,
And streamlets that flow without murm'ring;
Smooth streamlets from caverns of Kathos
Where broodth the calm spirits of twilight.
And over the lakes and the streamlets
Are bridges of pure alabaster,
White bridges all cunningly carven
With figures of fairies and daemons.
Here glimmer strange suns and strange planets,
And strange is the crescent Bnapis
That sets 'yond the ivy-grown ramparts
Where thicken the dusk of the evening.
Here fall the white vapors of Yabon;
And here in the swirl of vapors
I saw the divine Nathicana;
The garlanded, white Nathicana;
The slow-eyed, red-lipped Nathicana;
The silver-voiced, sweet Nathicana;
The pale-rob'd, belov'd Nathicana.
And ever was she my beloved,
From ages when time was unfashioned
Now anything fashion'd but Yabon.
And here dwelt we ever and ever,
The innocent children of Zais,
At peace in the paths and the arbors,
White-crowned with the blest nephalot.
How oft would we float in the twilight

O'er flow'r-cover'd pastures and hillsides
All white with the lowly astalthon;
The lowly yet lovely astalthon,
And dream in a world made of dreaming
The dreams that are fairer than Aidenn;
Bright dreams that are truer than reason!
So dreamed and so lov'd we thro' ages,
Till came the cursed season of Dzannin;
The daemon-damn'd season of Dzannin;
When red shone the suns and the planets,
And red gleamed the crescent Banapis,
And red fell the vapors of Yabon.
Then redden'd the blossoms and streamlets
And lakes that lay under the bridges,
And even the calm alabaster
glowed pink with uncanny reflections
Till all the carv'd fairies and daemons
Leer'd redly from the backgrounds of shadow.
Now redden'd my vision, and madly
I strove to peer thro' the dense curtain
And glimpsed the divine Nathicana;
The pure, ever-pale Nathicana;
The lov'd, the unchang'd Nathicana.
But vortex on vortex of madness
Beclouded my laboring vision;
My damnable, reddening vision
That built a new world for my seeing;
Anew world of redness and darkness,
A horrible coma call'd living
So now in this come call'd living
I view the bright phantoms of beauty;
The false hollow phantoms of beauty
That cloak all the evils of Dzannin.
I view them with infinite longing,
So like do they seem to my lov'd one:
Yet foul for their eyes shines their evil;
Their cruel and pitiless evil,
More evil than Thaphron and Latgoz,
Twice ill fro its gorgeous concealment.
And only in slumbers of midnight
Appears the lost maid Nathicana,
The pallid, the pure Nathicana
Who fades at the glance of the dreamer.
Again and again do I seek her;

I woo with deep draughts of Plathotis,
Deep draughts brew'd in wine of Astarte
And strengthen'd with tears of long weeping.
I yearn for the gardens of Zais;
The lovely, lost garden of Zais
Where blossoms the white nephalot,
The redolent herald of midnight.
The last potent draught am I brewing;
A draught that the daemons delight in;
A draught that will banish the redness;
The horrible coma call'd living.
Soon, soon, if I fail not in brewing,
The redness and madness will vanish,
And deep in the worm-people'd darkness
Will rot the base chains that have bound me.
Once more shall the gardens of Zais
Dawn white on my long-tortur'd vision,
And there midst the vapors of Yabon
Will stand the divine Nathicana;
The deathless, restor'd Nathicana
whose like is not met with in living.

NEMESIS

Published in *The Vagrant*, June 1918

Through the ghoul-guarded gateways of slumber,
Past the wan-mooned abysses of night,
I have lived o'er my lives without number,
I have sounded all things with my sight;
And I struggle and shriek ere the daybreak, being driven to madness with fright.

I have whirled with the earth at the dawning,
When the sky was a vaporous flame;
I have seen the dark universe yawning
Where the black planets roll without aim,
Where they roll in their horror unheeded, without knowledge or luster or name.

I had drifted o'er seas without ending,
Under sinister grey-clouded skies,
That the many-forked lightning is rending,
That resound with hysterical cries;
With the moans of invisible daemons, that out of the green waters rise.

I have plunged like a deer through the arches
Of the hoary primordial grove,
Where the oaks feel the presence that marches,
And stalks on where no spirit dares rove,
And I flee from a thing that surrounds me, and leers through dead branches
above.

I have stumbled by cave-ridden mountains
That rise barren and bleak from the plain,
I have drunk of the fog-foetid fountains
That ooze down to the marsh and the main;
And in hot cursed tarns I have seen things, I care not to gaze on again.

I have scanned the vast ivy-clad palace,
I have trod its untenanted hall,

Where the moon rising up from the valleys
Shows the tapestried things on the wall;
Strange figures discordantly woven, that I cannot endure to recall.

I have peered from the casements in wonder
At the mouldering meadows around,
At the many-roofed village laid under
The curse of a grave-girdled ground;
And from rows of white urn-carven marble, I listen intently for sound.

I have haunted the tombs of the ages,
I have flown on the pinions of fear,
Where the smoke-belching Erebus rages;
Where the jokulls loom snow-clad and drear:
And in realms where the sun of the desert consumes what it never can cheer.

I was old when the pharaohs first mounted
The jewel-decked throne by the Nile;
I was old in those epochs uncounted
When I, and I only, was vile;
And Man, yet untainted and happy, dwelt in bliss on the far Arctic isle.

Oh, great was the sin of my spirit,
And great is the reach of its doom;
Not the pity of Heaven can cheer it,
Nor can respite be found in the tomb:
Down the infinite aeons come beating the wings of unmerciful gloom.

Through the ghoul-guarded gateways of slumber,
Past the wan-mooned abysses of night,
I have lived o'er my lives without number,
I have sounded all things with my sight;
And I struggle and shriek ere the daybreak, being driven to madness with fright.

THE NIGHTMARE LAKE

Published in *The Vagrant*, December 1919

There is a lake in distant Zan,
Beyond the wonted haunts of man,
Where broods alone in a hideous state
A spirit dead and desolate;
A spirit ancient and unholy,
Heavy with fearsome melancholy,
Which from the waters dull and dense
Draws vapors cursed with pestilence.
Around the banks, a mire of clay,
Sprawl things offensive in decay,
And curious birds that reach that shore
Are seen by mortals nevermore.
Here shines by day the searing sun
On glassy wastes beheld by none,
And here by night pale moonbeams flow
Into the deeps that yawn below.
In nightmares only is it told
What scenes beneath those beams unfold;
What scenes, too old for human sight,
Lie sunken there in endless night;
For in those depths there only pace
The shadows of a voiceless race.
One midnight, redolent of ill,
I saw that lake, asleep and still;
While in the lurid sky there rode
A gibbous moon that glow'd and glow'd.
I saw the stretching marshy shore,
And the foul things those marshes bore:
Lizards and snakes convuls'd and dying;
Ravens and vampires putrefying;
All these, and hov'ring o'er the dead,
Narcophagi that on them fed.
And as the dreadful moon climb'd high,
Fright'ning the stars from out the sky,
I saw the lake's dull water glow
Till sunken things appear'd below.
There shone unnumber'd fathoms down,
The tow'rs of a forgotten town;
The tarnish'd domes and mossy walls;
Weed-tangled spires and empty halls;

Deserted fanes and vaults of dread,
And streets of gold uncoveted.
These I beheld, and saw beside
A horde of shapeless shadows glide;
A noxious horde which to my glance
Seem'd moving in a hideous dance
Round slimy sepulchres that lay
Beside a never-travell'd way.
Straight from those tombs a heaving rose
That vex'd the waters' dull repose,
While lethal shades of upper space
Howl'd at the moon's sardonic face.
Then sank the lake within its bed,
Suck'd down to caverns of the dead,
Till from the reeking, new-stript earth
Curl'd foetid fumes of noisome birth.
About the city, nigh uncover'd,
The monstrous dancing shadows hover'd,
When lo! there oped with sudden stir
The portal of each sepulchre!
No ear may learn, no tongue may tell
What nameless horror then befell.
I see that lake—that moon agrin—
That city and the things within—
Waking, I pray that on that shore
The nightmare lake may sink no more!

ODE FOR JULY FOURTH, 1917

Published in *The United Amateur*, July 1917

As Columbia's brave scions, in anger array'd,
Once defy'd a proud monarch and built a new nation;
'Gainst their brothers of Britain unsheath'd the sharp blade
That hath ne'er met defeat nor endur'd desecration;
So must we in this hour
Show our valor and pow'r,
And dispel the black perils that over us low'r:
Whilst the sons of Britannia, no longer our foes,
Will rejoice in our triumphs and strengthen our blows!

See the banners of Liberty float in the breeze
That plays light o'er the regions our fathers defended;
Hear the voice of the million resound o'er the leas,
As deeds of the past are proclaim'd and commended;
And in splendor on high
Where our flags proudly fly,
See the folds we tore down flung again to the sky:
For the Emblem of England, in kinship unfurl'd,
Shall divide with Old Glory the praise of the world!

Bury'd now are the hatreds of subject and King,
And the strife that once sunder'd an Empire hath vanish'd.
With the fame of the Saxon the heavens shall ring
As the vultures of darkness are baffled and banish'd;
And the broad British sea,

Of her enemies free,
Shall in tribute bow gladly, Columbia to thee:
For the friends of the Right, in the field side by side,
Form a fabric of Freedom no hand can divide!

ON READING LORD DUNSANY'S *BOOK OF WONDER*

Published in *The Silver Clarion*, March 1920

The hours of night unheeded fly,
And in the grate the embers fade;
Vast shadows one by one pass by
In silent daemon cavalcade.

But still the magic volume holds
The raptur'd eye in realms apart,
And fulgent sorcery enfolds
The willing mind and eager heart.

The lonely room no more is there—
For to the sight in pomp appear
Temples and cities pois'd in air
And blazing glories—sphere on sphere.

ON RECEIVING A PICTURE OF SWANS

Published in *The Conservative*, January 1916

"Impromptu verse, or 'poetry' to order, is easy only when approached in the cooly prosaic spirit. Given something to say, a metrical mechanic like myself can easily hammer the matter into technically correct verse, substituting formal poetic diction for real inspiration or thought. For instance, I lately received a post-card bearing the picture of swans on a placid stream. Desiring to reply in appropriate verse, I harked back to the classic myth of Phaethon and Cygnus, handling it as follows:"

> With pensive grace, the melancholy Swan
> Mourns o'er the tomb of luckless Phaethon;
> On grassy banks the weeping poplars wave,
> And guard with tender card the wat'ry grave.
> Would that I might, should I too proudly claim
> An Heav'nly parent, or a God-like fame;
> When flown too high, and dash'd to depths below,
> Receive such tribute as a Cygnus' woe!
> The faithful bird, that dumbly floats along,
> Sighs all the deeper for his want of song.

"This required about 10 minutes of composition." (From a letter to Robert Kleiner, 1915).

THE OUTPOST

Published in *Bacon's Essays*, Spring 1930

When evening cools the yellow stream,
And shadows stalk the jungle's ways,
Zimbabwe's palace flares ablaze
For a great King who fears to dream.

For he alone of all mankind
Waded the swamp that serpents shun;
And struggling toward the setting sun,
Came on the veldt that lies behind.

No other eyes had vented there
Since eyes were lent for human sight—
But there, as sunset turned to night,
He found the Elder Secret's lair.

Strange turrets rose beyond the plain,
And walls and bastions spread around
The distant domes that fouled the ground
Like leprous fungi after rain.

A grudging moon writhed up to shine
Past leagues where life can have no home;
And paling far-off tower and dome,
Shewed each unwindowed and malign.

Then he who in his boyhood ran
Through vine-hung ruins free of fear,
Trembled at what he saw—for here
Was no dead, ruined seat of man.

Inhuman shapes, half-seen, half-guessed,
Half solid and half ether-spawned,
Seethed down from starless voids that yawned
In heav'n, to these blank walls of pest.

And voidward from that pest-mad zone
Amorphous hordes seethed darkly back,
Their dim claws laden with the wrack
Of things that men have dreamed and known.

The ancient Fishers from Outside—
Were there not tales the high-priest told,
Of how they found the worlds of old,

And took what pelf their fancy spied?

Their hidden, dread-ringed outposts brood
Upon a million worlds of space;
Abhorred by every living race,
Yet scatheless in their solitude.

Sweating with fright, the watcher crept
Back to the swamp that serpents shun,
So that he lay, by rise of sun,
Safe in the palace where he slept.

None saw him leave, or come at dawn,
Nor does his flesh bear any mark
Of what he met in that curst dark—
Yet from his sleep all peace has gone.

When evening cools the yellow stream,
And shadows stalk the jungle's ways,
Zimbabwe's palace flares ablaze,
For a great King who fears to dream.

PACIFIST WAR SONG—1917

Published in *The Tryout*, March 1917

We are the valiant Knights of Peace
Who prattle for the Right:
Our banner is of snowy fleece,
Inscrib'd: "TOO PROUD TO FIGHT!"

By sweet Chautauqua's flow'ry banks
We love to sing and play,
But should we spy a foeman's ranks!
We'd proudly run away!

When Prussian fury sweeps the main
Our freedom to deny;
Of tyrant laws we ne'er complain;
But gladsomely comply!

We do not fear the submarines
That plough the troubled foam;
We scorn the ugly old machines—
And safely stay at home!

They say our country's close to war
And soon must man the guns;
But we see naught to struggle for—
We love the gentle Huns!

What though their hireling Greaser bands
Invade our southern plains?
We well can spare those boist'rous lands,
Content with what remains!

Our fathers were both rude and bold,
And would not live like brothers;
But we are of a finer mould—
We're much more like our mothers!

THE PEACE ADVOCATE

Published in *The Tryout*, May 1917

(Supposed to be a "pome," but cast strictly in modern meter)

The vicar sat in the firelight's glow,
A volume in his hand,
And a tear he shed for the widespread woe,
And the anguish brought by the vicious foe
That overran the land.

But never a hand for his King raised he,
For he was a man of peace;
And he car'd not a whit for the victory
That must come to preserve his nation free,
And the world from fear release.

His son had buckled on his sword,
The first at the front was he.
But the vicar his valiant child ignor'd
And his noble deeds in the field deplor'd,
For he knew not bravery.

On his flock he strove to fix his will,
And lead them to scorn the fray.
He told them that conquest brings but ill;
That meek submission would serve them still
To keep the foe away.

In vain did he hear the bugle's sound
That strove to avert the fall.
The land, quoth he, is all men's ground,
What matter if friend or foe be found
As master of us all?

One day from the village green hard by
The vicar heard a roar
Of cannon that rival'd the anguish'd cry
Of the hundreds that liv'd but wish'd to die
As the enemy rode them o'er.

Now he sees his own cathedral shake

At the foemen's wanton aim.
The ancient towers with the bullets quake;
The steeples fall, the foundations break,
And the whole is lost in flame.

Up the vicarage lane file the cavalcade,
And the vicar, and daughter, and wife
Scream out in vain for the needed aid
That only a regiment might have made
Ere they lose what is more than life.

Then quick to his brain came manhood's thought.
As he saw his erring course,
And the vicar his dusty rifle brought
That the foe might at least by one be fought,
And force repaid with force.

One shot—the enemy's blasting fire
A breach in the wall cuts through,
But the vicar replies with his wakened ire;
Fells one arm'd brute for each fallen spire,
And in blood is born anew.

Two shots—the wife and daughter sink,
Each with a mortal wound,
And the vicar, too madden'd by far to think,
Rushes boldly on to death's vague brink
With the manhood he has found.

Three shots—but shots of another kind
The smoky regions rend.
And upon the foemen with rage gone blind,
like a ceaseless, resistless, avenging wind,
The rescuing troops descend.

The smoke-pall clears, and the vicar's son
His father's life has sav'd.
And the vicar looks o'er ruin done,
Ere the victory by his child was won,
His face with care engrav'd.

The vicar sat in the firelight's glow,
The volume in his hand

That brought to his hearth the bitter woe
Which only a husband and father can know,
And truly understand.

With a chasten'd mien he flung the book
To the leaping flames before,
And a breath of sad relief he took
As the pages blacken'd beneath his look—
The fool of peace no more!

Epilogue

The reverend parson, wak'd to man's estate,
Laments his wife's and daughter's common fate.
His martial son in warm embrace enfolds,
And clings the tighter to the child he holds:
His peaceful notions, banish'd in an hour,
Will nevermore his wit or sense devour,
But steep'd in truth, 'tis now his nobler plan
To cure, yet recognize, the faults of man.

POEMATA MINORA—VOLUME II

To The Gods, Heros, & Ideals Of The Ancients
This Volume Is Affectionately Dedicated
By A Great Admirer

I submit to the publick these idle lines, hoping they will please. They form a sort of series, with my Odyssey, Iliad, Aeneid, and the like.

1. ODE TO SELENE OR DIANA

Published as "To Selene" in *The Tryout*, April 1919

Immortal Moon, in maiden dream the shine;
Dispense thy beams, divine Latona's child.
Thy silver rays all grosser things define,
And hide harsh Truth in sweet illusion mild.

In thy soft light, the city of unrest
That stands so squalid in thy brother's glare,
Throws off its habit, and in silence blest,
Becomes a vision, sparkling bright and fair.

The modern world,with all its care and pain
The smoky streets, the loathsome clanging mills,
Face 'neath thy beams, Selene, and again
We dream as shepherds on Chaldea's hills.

Take heed, Diana, of my humble plea;
Convey me where my happiness can last,
Draw me against the tide of Time's rough sea,
And let my spirit rest amidst the past.

2. TO THE OLD PAGAN RELIGION

Published in *The Tryout*, April 1919

Olympian gods! how can I let ye go,
And pin my faith to this new Christian creed?
Can I resign the deities I know,
for him who on a cross for man did bleed?

How in my weakness can my hopes depend
On one lone god, tho' mighty be his pow'r?
Why can Jove's host no more assistance lend,
To Soothe my pain, and cheer my troubled hour?

Are there no dryads on these wooded mounts
O'er which I oft in desolation roam?
Are there no naiads in these crystal founts
Or nereids upon the ocean foam?

Fast spreads the new; the older faith declines;
The name of Christ resounds upon the air;
But my wrack'd soul in solitude repines
And gives the gods their last-received pray'r.

3. ON THE RUIN OF ROME

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

How dost thou lie, O Rome, neath the foot of the Teuton
Slaves are they men, and bent to the will of thy conqueror;
Wither hath gone, great city, the race that gave law to all nations,
Subdu'd the East and the West, and made them bow down to thy consuls,
Knew not defeat, but gave it to all who attack'd thee?

Dead! and replac'd by these wretches who cower in confusion.
Dead! they who gave us this empire to guard and to live in,
Rome, thou didst fall from thy pow'r with the proud race that made thee,
And we, base Italians, enjoy'd what we could not have builded.

4. TO PAN

Published as "Pan" in *The Tryout*, April 1919

Seated in a woodland glen
By a shallow stream
Once I fell a-musing, when
I was lull'd into a dream.

From the brook a shape arose
Half a man and half a goat,
Hoofs it had instead of toes
And a beard adorn'd its throat.

On a set of rustic reeds
Sweetly play'd this hybrid man
Naught car'd I for earthly needs,
For I knew that this was Pan.

Nymphs and Satyrs gather'd round
To enjoy the lively sound.

All to soon I woke in pain
And return'd to haunts of men
But in rural vales I'd fain
Live and hear Pan's pipes again

5. ON THE VANITY OF HUMAN AMBITION

Published in *The Ancient Track: The Collected Poetical Works of H.P. Lovecraft*, 1998

Apollo, chasing Daphne, claim'd his prize
But lo! she turn'd to wood before his eyes.
More modern swains at golden prizes aim,
And ever strive some worldly thing to claim,
Yet 'tis the same as in Apollo's case,
For, once attain'd, the purest gold seems base.
All that men seek's unworthy of the quest,
Yet seek they will, and never pause for rest.
True bliss, methinks, a man can only find
In virtuous life, and cultivated mind.

THE POE-ET'S NIGHTMARE—A FABLE

Published in *The Vagrant*, July 1918

Luxus tumultus semper causa est.

Lucullus Languish, student of the skies,
And connoisseur of rarebits and mince pies,
A bard by choice, a grocer's clerk by trade,
(Grown pessimist through honors long delay'd)
A secret yearning bore, that he might shine
In breathing numbers, and in song divine.
Each day his fountain pen was wont to drop
An ode or dirge or two about the shop,
Yet naught could strike the chord within his heart
That throbb'd for poesy, and cry'd for art.
Each eve he sought his bashful Muse to wake
With overdoses of ice cream and cake,
But though th'ambitious youth a dreamer grew,
Th' Aonian Nymph declin'd to come to view.

Something at dusk he scour'd the heav'ns afar
Searching for raptures in the evening star;
One night he strove to catch a tale untold
In crystal deeps—but only caught a cold.
So pin'd Lucullus with his lofty woe,
Till one drear day he bought a set of Poe:
Charm'd with the cheerful horrors there display's,
He vow'd with gloom to woo the Heav'nly Maid.
Of Auber's Tarn and Yaanek's slope he dreams,
And weaves an hundred Ravens in his schemes.
Not far from our young hero's peaceful home,
Lies the fair grove wherein he loves to roam.
Though but a stunted copse in vacant lot,
He dubs it Temp-e, and adores the spot;
When shallow puddles dot the wooded plain,
And brim o'er muddy banks with muddy rain,

He calls them limpid lakes or poison pools,
(Depending on which bard his fancy rules.)
‘Tis here he comes with Heliconian fire
On Sundays when he smites the Attic lyre;
And here one afternoon he brought his gloom,
Resolv’d to chant a poet’s lay of doom.
Roget’s Thesaurus, and a book of rhymes,
Provide the rungs whereon his spirit climbs:
With this grave retinue he trod the grove
And pray’d the Fauns he might a Poe-et prove.
But sad to tell, ere Pegasus flew high,
The not unrelish’d supper hour drew nigh;
Our tuneful swain th’imperious call attends,
And soon above the groaning table bends.
Though it were too prosaic to relate
Th’ exact particulars of what he ate,
(Such long-drawn lists the hasty reader skips,
Like Homer’s well-known catalogue of ships)
This much we swear: that as adjournment near’d,
A monstrous lot of cake had disappear’d!
Soon to his chamber the young bard repairs,
And courts soft Somnus with sweet Lydian airs;
Through open casement scans the star-strewn deep,
And ‘neath Orion’s beams sinks off to sleep.

Now start from airy dell the elfin train
That dance each midnight o’er the sleeping plain,
To bless the just, or cast a warning spell
On those who dine not wisely, but too well.
First Deacon Smith they plague, whose nasal glow
Comes from what Holmes hath call’d “Elixir Pro”;
Group’d round the couch his visage they deride,
Whilst through his dreams unnumber’d serpents glide.
Next troop the little folk into the room

Where snore our young Endymion, swath'd in gloom:
A smile lights up his boyish face, whilst he
Dreams of the moon—or what he ate at tea.
The chieftain elf th' unconscious youth surveys,
and on his form a strange enchantment lays:
Those lips, that lately trill'd with frosted cake,
Uneasy sounds in slumbrous fashion make;
At length their owner's fancies they rehearse,
And lisp this awesome Poe-em in blank verse:

Aletheia Phrikodes

Omnia risus et omnia pulvis et omnia nihil.

Demoniac clouds, up-pil'd in chasmy reach
Of soundless heav'n, smother'd the brooding night;
Nor came the wonted whisp'rings of the swamp,
Nor voice of autumn wind along the moor,
Nor mutter'd noises of th' insomnious grove
Whose black recesses never saw the sun.
Within that grove a hideous hollow lies,
Half bare of trees; a pool in center lurks
That none dares sound; a tarn of murky face,
(Though naught can prove its hue, since light of day,
Affrighted, shuns the forest-shadow's banks.)
Hard by, a yawning hillside grotto breathes
From deeps unvisited, a dull, dank air
That sears the leaves on certain stunted trees
Which stand about, clawing the spectral gloom
With evil boughs. To this accursed dell
Come woodland creatures, seldom to depart:
Once I behold, upon a crumbling stone
Set altar-like before the cave, a thing
I saw not clearly, yet from glimpsing, fled.
In this half-dusk I meditate alone
At many a weary noontide, when without
A world forgets me in its sun-blest mirth.
Here howls by night the werewolves, and the

souls
Of those that knew me well in other days.
Yet on this night the grove spake not to me;
Nor spake the swamp, nor wind along the moor
Nor moan'd the wind about the lonely eaves
Of the bleak, haunted pile wherein I lay.
I was afraid to sleep, or quench the spark
Of the low-burning taper by my couch.
I was afraid when through the vaulted space
Of the old tow'r, the clock-ticks died away
Into a silence so profound and chill
That my teeth chatter'd—giving yet no sound.
Then flicker'd low the light, and all dissolv'd
Leaving me floating in the hellish grasp
Of body'd blackness, from whose beating wings
Came ghoulish blasts of charnel-scented mist.
things vague, unseen, unfashion'd, and unnam'd
Jostled each other in the seething void
That gap'd, chaotic, downward to a sea
Of speechless horror, foul with writhing thoughts.
All this I felt, and felt the mocking eyes
Of the curs's universe upon my soul;
Yet naught I saw nor heard, till flash'd a beam
Of lurid luster through the rotting heav'ns,
Playing on scenes I labor'd not to see.
Methought the nameless tarn, alight at last,
Reflected shapes, and more reveal'd within
Those shocking depths that ne'er were seen before;
Methought from out the cave a demon train,
Grinning and smirking, reel'd in fiendish rout;
Bearing within their reeking paws a load
Of carrion viands for an impious feast.
Methought the stunted trees with hungry arms
Grop'd greedily for things I dare not name;
The while a stifling, wraith-like noisomeness

Fill'd all the dale, and spoke a larger life
Of uncorporeal hideousness awake
In the half-sentient wholeness of the spot.
Now glow'd the ground, and tarn, and cave, and trees,
And moving forms, and things not spoken of,
With such a phosphorescence as men glimpse
In the putrescent thickets of the swamp
Where logs decaying lie, and rankness reigns.
Methought a fire-mist drap'd with lucent fold
The well-remember'd features of the grove,
Whilst whirling ether bore in eddying streams
The hot, unfinish'd stuff of nascent worlds
Hither and thither through infinity
Of light and darkness, strangely intermix'd;
Wherein all entity had consciousness,
Without th' accustom'd outward shape of life.
Of these swift circling currents was my soul,
Free from the flesh, a true constituent part;
Nor felt I less myself, for want of form.
Then clear'd the mist, and o'er a star-strewn scene
Divine and measureless, I gaz'd in awe.
Alone in space, I view'd a feeble fleck
Of silvern light, marking the narrow ken
Which mortals call the boundless universe.
On ev'ry side, each as a tiny star,
Shone more creations, vaster than our own,
And teeming with unnumber'd forms of life;
Though we as life would recognize it not,
Being bound to earthy thoughts of human mould.
As on a moonless night the Milky Way
In solid sheen displays its countless orbs
To weak terrestrial eyes, each orb a sun;
So beam'd the prospect on my wond'ring soul;
A spangled curtain, rich with twinkling gems,
Yet each a mighty universe of suns.
But as I gaz'd, I sens'd a spirit voice
In speech didactic, though no voice it was,
Save as it carried thought. It bade me mark
That all the universes in my view
Form'd but an atom in infinity;

Whose reaches pass the ether-laden realms
Of heat and light, extending to far fields
Where flourish worlds invisible and vague,
Fill'd with strange wisdom and uncanny life,
And yet beyond; to myriad spheres of light,
To spheres of darkness, to abysmal voids
That know the pulses of disorder'd force.
Big with these musings, I survey'd the surge
Of boundless being, yet I us'd not eyes,
For spirit leans not on the props of sense.
The docent presence swell'd my strength of soul;
All things I knew, but knew with mind alone.
Time's endless vista spread before my thought
With its vast pageant of unceasing change
And sempiternal strife of force and will;
I saw the ages flow in stately stream
Past rise and fall of universe and life;
I saw the birth of suns and worlds, their death,
Their transmutation into limpid flame,
Their second birth and second death, their course
Perpetual through the aeons' termless flight,
Never the same, yet born again to serve
The varying purpose of omnipotence.
And whilst I watch'd, I knew each second's space
Was greater than the lifetime of our world.
Then turn'd my musings to that speck of dust
Whereon my form corporeal took its rise;
That speck, born but a second, which must die
In one brief second more; that fragile earth;
That crude experiment; that cosmic sport
Which holds our proud, aspiring race of mites
And moral vermin; those presuming mites
Whom ignorance with empty pomp adorns,
And misinstructs in specious dignity;
Those mites who, reas'ning outward, vaunt themselves
As the chief work of Nature, and enjoy
In fatuous fancy the particular care

Of all her mystic, super-regnant pow'r.
And as I strove to vision the sad sphere
Which lurk'd, lost in ethereal vortices;
Methought my soul, tun'd to the infinite,
Refus'd to glimpse that poor atomic blight;
That misbegotten accident of space;
That globe of insignificance, whereon
(My guide celestial told me) dwells no part
Of empyreal virtue, but where breed
The coarse corruptions of divine disease;
The fest'ring ailments of infinity;
The morbid matter by itself call'd man:
Such matter (said my guide) as oft breaks forth
On broad Creation's fabric, to annoy
For a brief instant, ere assuaging death
Heal up the malady its birth provok'd.
Sicken'd, I turn'd my heavy thoughts away.
Then spake th' ethereal guide with mocking mien,
Upbraiding me for searching after Truth;
Visiting on my mind the searing scorn
Of mind superior; laughing at the woe
Which rent the vital essence of my soul.
Methought he brought remembrance of the time
When from my fellows to the grove I stray'd,
In solitude and dusk to meditate
On things forbidden, and to pierce the veil
Of seeming good and seeming beauteousness
That covers o'er the tragedy of Truth,
Helping mankind forget his sorry lot,
And raising Hope where Truth would crush it down.
He spake, and as he ceas'd, methought the flames
Of fuming Heav'n revolv'd in torments dire;
Whirling in maelstroms of rebellious might,
Yet ever bound by laws I fathom'd not.
Cycles and epicycles of such girth
That each a cosmos seem'd, dazzled my gaze
Till all a wild phantasmal flow became.
Now burst athwart the fulgent formlessness
A rift of purer sheen, a sight supernal,

Broader that all the void conceiv'd by man,
Yet narrow here. A glimpse of heav'ns beyond;
Of weird creations so remote and great
That ev'n my guide assum'd a tone of awe.
Borne on the wings of stark immensity,
A touch of rhythm celestial reach'd my soul;
Thrilling me more with horror than with joy.
Again the spirit mock'd my human pangs,
And deep revil'd me for presumptuous thoughts;
Yet changing now his mien, he bade me scan
The wid'ning rift that clave the walls of space;
He bade me search it for the ultimate;
He bade me find the truth I sought so long;
He bade me brave th' unutterable Thing,
The final Truth of moving entity.
All this he bade and offer'd—but my soul,
Clinging to life, fled without aim or knowledge,
Shrieking in silence through the gibbering deeps.

* * * * *

Thus shriek'd the young Lucullus, as he fled
Through gibbering deeps—and tumbled out of bed;
Within the room the morning sunshine gleams,
Whilst the poor youth recalls his troubled dreams.
He feels his aching limbs, whose woeful pain
Informs his soul his body lives again,
And thanks his stars—or cosmoses—or such —
That he survives the noxious nightmare's clutch.
Thrill'd with the music of th' eternal spheres,
(Or is it the alarm-clock that he hears?)
He vows to all the Pantheon, high and low,
No more to feed on cake, or pie, or Poe.
And now his gloomy spirits seem to rise,
As he the world beholds with clearer eyes;

The cup he thought too full of dregs to quaff,
Affords him wine enough to raise a laugh.
(All this is metaphor—you must not think
Our late Endymion prone to stronger drink!)
With brighter visage and with lighter heart,
He turns his fancies to the grocer's mart;
And strange to say, at last he seems to find
His daily duties worthy of his mind.
Since Truth prov'd such a high and dang'rous goal,
Our bard seeks one less trying to his soul;
With deep-drawn breath he flouts his dreary woes,
And a good clerk from a bad poet grows!
Now close attend my lay, ye scribbling crew
That bay the moon in numbers strange and new;
That madly for the spark celestial bawl
In meters short or long, or none at all;
Curb your rash force, in numbers or at tea,
Nor over-zealous for high fancies be;
Reflect, ere ye the draught Pierian take,
What worthy clerks or plumbers ye might make;
Wax not too frenzied in the leaping line
That neither sense nor measure can confine,
Lest ye, like young Lucullus Languish, groan
Beneath Poe-etic nightmares of your own!

PROVIDENCE

Published in *The Brooklynite*, November 1924

Where bay and river tranquil blend,
And leafy hillsides rise,
The spires of Providence ascend
Against the ancient skies,
And in the narrow winding ways
That climb o'er slope and crest,
The magic of forgotten days
May still be found to rest.
A fanlight's gleam, a knocker's blow,
A glimpse of Georgian brick—
The sights and sounds of long ago
Where fancies cluster thick.
A flight of steps with iron rail,
A belfry looming tall,
A slender steeple, carved and pale,
A moss-grown garden wall.
A hidden churchyard's crumbling proofs
Of man's mortality,
A rotting wharf where gambrel roofs
Keep watch above the sea.
Square and parade, whose walls have towered
Full fifteen decades long
By cobbled ways 'mid trees embowered,
And slighted by the throng.
Stone bridges spanning languid streams,
Houses perched on the hill,
And courts where mysteries and dreams
The brooding spirit fill.
Steep alley steps by vines concealed,
Where small-paned windows glow
At twilight on a bit of field
That chance has left below.
My Providence! What airy hosts
Turn still thy gilded vanes;
What winds of elf that with grey ghosts
People thine ancient lanes!
The chimes of evening as of old
Above thy valleys sound,
While thy stern fathers 'neath the mould

Make blest thy sacred ground.

REVELATION

Published in *The Tryout*, March 1919

In a vale of light and laughter,
Shining ‘neath the friendly sun,
Where fulfillment follow’d after
Ev’ry hope or dream begun;
Where an Aidenn gay and glorious,
Beckon’d down the winsome way;
There my soul, o’er pain victorious,
Laugh’d and lingered—yesterday.

Green and narrow was my valley,
Temper’d with a verdant shade;
Sun deck’d brooklets musically
Sparkled thro’ each glorious glade;
And at night the stars serenely
Glow’d betwixt the boughs o’erhead,
While Astarte, calm and queenly,
Floods of fairy radiance shed.

There amid the tinted bowers,
Raptur’d with the opiate spell
Of the grasses, ferns and flowers,
Poppy, Phlox and Pimpernel,
Long I lay, entranc’d and dreaming,
Pleas’d with Nature’s bounteous store,
Till I mark’d the shaded gleaming
Of the sky, and yearn’d for more.

Eagerly the branches tearing,
Clear’d I all the space above,
Till the bolder gaze, high faring,
Scann’d the naked skies of Jove;
Deeps unguess’d now shone before me,
Splendid beam’d the solar car;
Wings of fervid fancy bore me
Out beyond the farthest star.

Reaching, gasping, wishing, longing
For the pageant brought to sight,
Vain I watch’d the gold orbs thronging
Round the celestial poles of light.

Madly on a moonbeam ladder
Heav'ns abyss I sought to scale,
Ever wiser, ever sadder,
As the fruitless task would fail.

Then, with futile striving sated,
Veer'd my soul to earth again,
Well content that I was fated
For a fair, yet low domain;
Pleasing thoughts of glad tomorrows,
Like the blissful moments past,
Lull'd to rest my transient sorrows,
Still'd my godless greed at last.

But my downward glance, returning,
Shrank in fright from what it spy'd;
Slopes in hideous torment burning,
Terror in the brooklet's tide:
For the dell, of shade denuded
By my desecrating hand,
'Neath the bare sky blaz'd and brooded
As a lost, accursed land.

THE ROSE OF ENGLAND

Published in *The Scot*, October 1916

At morn the rosebud greets the sun
And sheds the evening dew,
Expanding ere the day is done,
In bloom of radiant hue
And when the sun his rest hath found,
Rose-Petals strew the garden round!

Thus that blest Isle that owns the Rose
From mist and darkness came,
A million glories to disclose,
And spread BRITANNIA'S name;
And ere Life's Sun shall leave the blue,
ENGLAND shall reign the whole world through!

SATURNALIA— CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Published in *The Ancient Track: The Collected Poetical Works of H.P. Lovecraft*, 1998

1. GOOD SAINT NICK

To Eugene B. Kuntz *et al*.

May good St. Nick, like as a bird of night,
Bring thee rich blessings in his annual flight;
Long by thy chimney rest his pond'rous pack,
And leave with lessen'd weight upon his back!

2. CHRISTMAS SNOWS

To Laurie A. Sawyer

As Christmas snows (as yet a poet's trope)
Call back one's bygone days of youth and hope,
Four metrick lines I send—they're quite enough—
Tho' once I fancy'd I could write the stuff!

3. HALCYON DAYS

To Sonia H. Greene

Once more the ancient feast returns,
And the bright hearth domestic burns
With Yuletide's added blaze;
So, too, may all your joys increase
Midst floods of mem'ry, love, and peace,
And dreams of Halcyon days.

4. ST. JOHN

To Rheinhart Kleiner

St. John, whose art sublimely shines
In liquid odes and melting lines,

Let Theobald his regard express
In verse of lesser loveliness.
As now in regal state appear
The festive hours of Yuletide cheer,
My strongest wish is that you may
Feel ev'ry blessing of the day!

5. LITTLE TIGER

To Felis (Frank Belknap Long's Cat)

Little Tiger, burning bright
With a subtle Blakeish light,
Tell what visions have their home
In those eyes of flame and chrome!
Children vex thee—thoughtless, gay—
Holding when thou wouldst away:
What dark lore is that which thou,
Spitting, mixest with thy meow?

6. CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

To Annie E.P. Gamwell

As when a pigeon, loos'd in realms remote,
Takes instant wing, and seeks his native cote,
So speed my blessings from a barb'rous clime
To thee and Providence at Christmas time!

7. EGYPTIAN CHRISTMAS

To Felis (Frank Belknap Long's Cat)

Haughty Sphinx, whose amber eyes
Hold the secrets of the skies,
As thou ripplest in thy grace,
Round the chairs and chimney-place,
Scorn on thy patrician face:
Hiss not harsh, nor use thy claws
On the hand that gives applause—
Good-will only doth abide
In these lines at Christmastide!

SUNSET

Published in *The Tryout*, December 1917

The cloudless day is richer at its close;
A golden glory settles on the lea;
Soft, stealing shadows hint of cool repose
To mellowing landscape, and to calming sea.

And in that nobler, gentler, lovelier light,
The soul to sweeter, loftier bliss inclines;
Freed form the noonday glare, the favor'd sight
Increasing grace in earth and sky divines.

But ere the purest radiance crowns the green,
Or fairest luster fills th' expectant grove,
The twilight thickens, and the fleeting scene
Leaves but a hallow'd memory of love!

TO CLARK ASHTON SMITH, ESQ., UPON HIS PHANTASTICK TALES, VERSES, PICTURES, AND SCULPTURES

Published in *Weird Tales*, April 1938

A time-black tower against dim banks of cloud;
Around its base the pathless, pressing wood.
Shadow and silence, moss and mould, enshroud
Grey, age-fell'd slabs that once as cromlechs stood.
No fall of foot, no song of bird awakes
The lethal aisles of sempiternal night,
Tho' oft with stir of wings the dense air shakes,
As in the tower there glows a pallid light.

For here, apart, dwells one whose hands have wrought
Strange eidola that chill the world with fear;
Whose graven runes in tones of dread have taught
What things beyond the star-gulfs lurk and leer.
Dark Lord of Averoigne—whose windows stare
On pits of dream no other gaze could bear!

TO EDWARD JOHN MORETON DRAX PLUNKELT, EIGHTEENTH BARON DUNSANY

Published in *The Tryout*, November 1919

As when the sun above a dusky wold,
Springs into sight and turns the gloom to gold,
Lights with his magic beams the dew-deck'd bow'r,
And wakes to life the gay responsive flow'r;
So now o'er realms where dark'ning dullness lies,
In solar state see shining PLUNKETT rise!
Monarch of Fancy! whose ethereal mind
Mounts fairy peaks, and leaves the throng behind;
Whose soul untainted bursts the bounds of space,
And leads to regions of supernal grace:
Can any praise thee with too strong a tone,
Who in this age of folly gleam'd alone?
Thy quill, DUNSANY, with an art divine
Recalls the gods to each deserted shrine;
From mystic air a novel pantheon makes,
And with new spirits fills the meads and brakes;
With thee we wander thro' primeval bow'rs,
For thou hast brought earth's childhood back, and ours!
How leaps the soul, with sudden bliss increas'd,
When led by thee to lands beyond the East!
Sick of this sphere, in crime and conflict old,
We yearn for wonders distant and untold;
O'er Homer's page a second time we pore,
And rack our brains for gleams of infant lore:
But all in vain-for valiant tho' we strive
No common means these pictures can revive.
Then dawns DUNSANY with celestial light
And fulgent visions break upon our sight:
His barque enchanted each sad spirit bears
To shores of gold, beyond the reach of cares.
No earthly trammels now our thoughts may chain;

For childhood's fancy hath come back again!
What glitt'ring worlds now wait our eager eyes!
What roads untrodden beckon thro' the skies!
Wonders on wonders line the gorgeous ways,
And glorious vistas greet the ravish'd gaze;
Mountains of clouds, castles of crystal dreams,
Ethereal cities and Elysian streams;
Temples of blue, where myriad stars adore
Forgotten gods of aeons gone before!
Such are thine arts, DUNSANY, such thy skill,
That scarce terrestrial seems thy moving quill;
Can man, and man alone, successful draw
Such scenes of wonder and domains of awe?
Our hearts, enraptur'd, fix thy mind's abode
In high PEGANA: hail thee as a god;
And sure, can aught more high or godlike be
Than such a fancy as resides in thee?
Delighted Pan a friend and peer perceives
As thy sweet music stirs the sylvan leaves;
The Nine, transported, bless thy golden lyre:
Approve thy fancy, and applaud thy fire;
Whilst Jove himself assumes a brother's tone,
And vows the pantheon equal to his own.
DUNSANY, may thy days be glad and long;
Replete with visions, and atune with song;
May thy rare notes increasing millions cheer,
Thy name beloved, and thy mem'ry dear!
'Tis thou who hast in hours of dullness brought
New charms of language, and new gems of thought;
Hast with a poet's grace enrich'd the earth
With aureate dreams as noble as thy birth.
Grateful we name thee, bright with fix'd renown,
The fairest jewel in HIBERNIA'S crown.

UNDA, OR—THE BRIDE OF THE SEA

Published in *The Providence Amateur*, February 1916

Black loom the crags of the uplands behind me,
Dark are the sands of the far-stretching shore.
Dim are the pathways and rocks that remind me
Sadly of years in the lost Nevermore.

Soft laps the ocean on wave-polish'd boulder,
Sweet is the sound and familiar to me;
Here, with her head gently bent to my shoulder,
Walk'd I with Unda, the Bride of the Sea.

Bright was the morn of my youth when I met her,
Sweet as the breeze that blew o'er the brine.
Swift was I captur'd in Love's strongest fetter,
Glad to be here, and she glad to be mine.

Never a question ask'd I where she wander'd,
Never a question ask'd she of my birth:
Happy as children, we thought not nor ponder'd,
Glad of the bounty of ocean and earth.

Once when the moonlight play'd soft 'mid the billows,
High on the cliff o'er the waters we stood,
Bound was her hair with a garland of willows,
Pluck'd by the fount in the bird-haunted wood.

Strangely she gaz'd on the surges beneath her,
Charm'd with the sound or entranc'd by the light:
Then did the waves a wild aspect bequeath her,
Stern as the ocean and weird as the night.

Coldly she left me, astonish'd and weeping,
Standing alone 'mid the legions she bless'd:
Down, ever downward, half gliding, half creeping,
Stole the sweet Unda in oceanward quest.

Calm grew the sea, and tumultuous beating
Turn'd to a ripple as Unda the fair
Trod the wet sands in affectionate greeting,
Beckon'd to me, and no longer was there!

Long did I pace by the banks where she vanish'd,
High climb'd the moon and descended again.
Grey broke the dawn till the sad night was banish'd,
Still ach'd my soul with its infinite pain.

All the wide world have I search'd for my darling;
Scour'd the far desert and sail'd distant seas.
Once on the wave while the tempest was snarling,
Flash'd a fair face that brought quiet and ease.

Ever in restlessness onward I stumble
Seeking and pining scarce heeding my way.
Now have I stray'd where the wide waters rumble,
Back to the scene of the lost yesterday.

Lo! the red moon from the ocean's low hazes
Rises in ominous grandeur to view;
Strange is its face as my tortur'd eye gazes
O'er the vast reaches of sparkle and blue.

Straight from the moon to the shore where I'm sighing
Grows a bright bridge made of wavelets and beams.
Frail it may be, yet how simple the trying,
Wand'ring from earth to the orb of sweet

dreams.

What is yon face in the moonlight appearing;
Have I at last found the maiden that fled?
Out on the beam-bridge my footsteps are nearing
Her whose sweet beckoning hastens my tread.

Current's surround me, and drowsily swaying,
Far on the moon-path I seek the sweet face.
Eagerly, hasting, half panting, half praying,
Forward I reach for the vision of grace.

Murmuring waters about me are closing,
Soft the sweet vision advances to me.
Done are my trials; my heart is reposing
Safe with my Unda, the Bride of the Sea.

WASTE PAPER: A POEM OF PROFOUND INSIGNIFICANCE

Published in *A Winter Wish*, Whispers Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977

This poem is a parody of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and modernist poetry in general, which Lovecraft referred to as a "practically meaningless collection of phrases, learned allusions, quotations, slang, and scraps in general."

I

Out of the reaches of illimitable night
The blazing planet grew, and forc'd to life
Unending cycles of progressive strife
And strange mutations of undying light
And boresome books, than hell's own self more trite
And thoughts repeated and become a blight,
And cheap rum-hounds with moonshine hootch made tight,
And quite contrite to see the flight of fright so bright
I used to ride my bicycle in the night
With a dandy acetylene lantern that cost $3.00
In the evening, by the moonlight, you can hear those darkies singing
Meet me tonight—in dreamland… BAH!
I used to sit on the stairs of the house where I was born
After we left it but before it was sold
And play on a zobo with two other boys.
We called ourselves the Blackstone Military Band
Won't you come home, Bill Bailey, won't you come home?
In the spring of the year, in the silver rain
When petal by petal the blossoms fall
And the mocking birds call
And the whippoorwill sings, Marguerite.
The first cinema show in our town opened in 1906

At the old Olympic, which was then call'd Park,
And moving beams shot weirdly thro' the dark
And spit tobacco seldom hit the mark.
Have you read Dickens' American Notes?
My great-great-grandfather was born in a white house
Under green trees in the country
And he used to believe in religion and the weather.

II

"Shantih, shantih, shantih"…"Shanty House"
Was the name of a novel by I forget whom
Published serially in the "All-Story Weekly"
Before it was a weekly. Advt.
Disillusion is wonderful, I've been told,
And I take quinine to stop a cold
But it makes my ears… always…
Always ringing in my ears…
It is the ghost of the Jew I murdered that Christmas day
Because he played "Three O'Clock in the Morning" in the flat above me…
Three O'Clock in the morning, I've danc'd the whole night through
Dancing on the graves in the graveyard
Where life is buried; life and beauty
Life and art and love and duty
Ah, there, sweet cutie.
Stung!
Out of the night that covers me
Black as the pit from pole to pole
I never quote things straight except by accident.
Sophistication! Sophistication!
You are the idol of our nation
Each fellow has
Fallen for jazz
And we'll give the past a merry razz
Thro' the ghoul-guarded gateways of slumber

And fellow-guestship with the glutless worm.
Next stop is 57th St.—57th St. the next stop.
Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring,
And the governor-general of Canada is Lord Byng
Whose ancestor was shot or hung,
I forget which, the good die young.
Here's to your ripe old age,
Copyright, 1847, by Joseph Miner,
Entered according to act of Congress.

III

In the office of the librarian of Congress
America was discovered in 1492
This way out.
No, lady, you gotta change at Washington St. to the Everett train.
Out in the rain on the elevated
Crated, sated, all mismated.
Twelve seats on this bench,
How quaint.
In a shady nook, beside a brook, two lovers stroll along.
Express to Park Ave., Car Following.
No, we had it cleaned with the sand blast.
I know it ought to be torn down.
Before the bar of a saloon there stood a reckless crew,
When one said to another, "Jack, this message came for you."
"It may be from a sweetheart, boys," said someone in the crowd,
And here the words are missing… but Jack cried out aloud:
"It's only a message from home, sweet home,
From loved ones down on the farm
Fond wife and mother, sister and brother…"
Bootleggers all and you're another
In the shade of the old apple tree
'Neath the old cherry tree sweet Marie
The Conchologist's First Book
By Edgar Allan Poe

Stubbed his toe
On a broken brick that didn't show
Or a banana peel
In the fifth reel
By George Creel
It is to laugh
And quaff
It makes you stout and hale
And all my days I'll sing the praise
Of Ivory Soap
Have you a little T. S. Eliot in your house?

IV

The stag at eve had drunk his fill
The thirsty hart look'd up the hill
And craned his neck just as a feeler
To advertise the Double-Dealer.
William Congreve was a gentleman
O art what sins are committed in thy name
For tawdry fame and fleeting flame
And everything, ain't dat a shame?
Mah Creole Belle, ah lubs yo' well;
Aroun' mah heart you hab cast a spell
But I can't learn to spell pseudocracy
Because there ain't no such word.
And I says to Lizzie, if Joe was my feller
I'd teach him to go to dances with that
Rat, bat, cat, hat, flat, plat, fat
Fry the fat, fat the fry
You'll be a drug-store by and by.
Get the hook!
Above the lines of brooding hills
Rose spires that reeked of nameless ills,
And ghastly shone upon the sight
In ev'ry flash of lurid light
To be continued.
No smoking.
Smoking on four rear seats.
Fare win return to 5 cents after August 1st
Except outside the Cleveland city limits.
In the ghoul-haunted Woodland of Weir
Strangers pause to shed a tear;

Henry Fielding wrote “Tom Jones”
And cursed be he that moves my bones.
I saw the Leonard-Tendler fight
Farewell, farewell, O go to hell.
Nobody home
In the shantih.

IN A SEQUESTER'D PROVIDENCE CHURCHYARD WHERE ONCE POE WALKED

Published in *Four Acrostic Sonnets On Edgar Allan Poe*, Maurice W. Moe, Milwaukee, WI, 1936

Eternal brood the shadows on this ground,
Dreaming of centuries that have gone before;
Great elms rise solemnly by slab and mound,
Arched high above a hidden world of yore.
Round all the scene a light of memory plays,
And dead leaves whisper of departed days,
Longing for sights and sounds that are no more.

Lonely and sad, a specter glides along
Aisles where of old his living footsteps fell;
No common glance discerns him, though his song
Peals down through time with a mysterious spell.
Only the few who sorcery's secret know,
Espy amidst these tombs the shade of Poe.

THE WOOD

Published in *The Tryout*, January 1929

They cut it down, and where the pitch-black aisles
Of forest night had hid eternal things,
They scaled the sky with towers and marble piles
To make a city for their revelings.

White and amazing to the lands around
That wondrous wealth of domes and turrets rose;
Crystal and ivory, sublimely crowned
With pinnacles that bore unmelting snows.

And through its halls the pipe and sistrum rang,
While wine and riot brought their scarlet stains;
Never a voice of elder marvels sang,
Nor any eye called up the hills and plains.

Thus down the years, till on one purple night
A drunken minstrel in his careless verse
Spoke the vile words that should not see the light,
And stirred the shadows of an ancient curse.

Forests may fall, but not the dusk they shield;
So on the spot where that proud city stood,
The shuddering dawn no single stone revealed,
But fled the blackness of a primal wood.

THE END